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HISTORY OF THE LIFE  
OF  
ALBAN N. TOWNE

A CHARACTER STUDY

BY  
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*A. A. Towne*

# HISTORY OF THE LIFE

OF

# ALBAN N. TOWNE

A GRADUATE FROM THE OLD SCHOOL OF RAILROADING—THE PROBLEM OF TRANSPORTATION—NEW ENGLAND AND THE FAR WEST—THE POWER OF SELF-HELP EXEMPLIFIED—EMINENT SUCCESS EARNED BY HARD WORK—FORCE OF CHARACTER AND TALENT—A CAREER OF EXTRAORDINARY USEFULNESS AND BRILLIANCY.

ON the twenty-sixth day of May 1829 occurred one of the most suggestive incidents in the history of economics in the United States. The first locomotive engine ever used in this country, the Stourbridge Lion, built at Stourbridge, England for the Delaware and Hudson Canal company arrived in New York city on that day. Its advent marked the birth of railway transportation in America, which, expanding with marvellous rapidity, has become supreme in importance as an independent industry and a vital factor in the development and control of all other industries. In the outset, evoked to promote commerce, it now creates commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and mining. In the progress of the United States during the last sixty years toward the first place among the nations of the earth in material wealth, enlightenment, and power, it has been the most potent agency. An institution idealizing American talent and enterprise, it has grown with greater speed and into higher efficiency on this soil than elsewhere. At the close of 1890 there were 371,877 miles of railroad in the world, 162,476 miles in the

United States, and 6,348 miles belonging to the Southern Pacific company, together with 7,276 miles of steamship lines. Of its entire property Alban Nelson Towne is second vice-president; and he is also the general manager of its Pacific system which includes all lines west of Ogden and El Paso.



The spokes and fellows of the driving-wheels of the engine, of which the above figure is an exact representation, were of wood; the hubs and tires of iron. The track on which it ran was equally primitive. The lion's face adorned the front of the boiler.

It is noticeable, that he was born on the same day that a throng of curious and interested spectators gathered at the foot of Beach street to welcome the Stourbridge Lion, which was placed upon the rails of the company for which it was imported, on its trial trip, at Honesdale, Pennsylvania, August 8, 1829. To all appearance no two events, so coupled, as to time, could have been more distinct, or more remote from each other in origin. The coincidence, so far as human knowledge can discern, was without design, and meaningless, and might never have been noticed, but, in view of the development of the child, as well as of the locomotive, the mind is incited to speculation. The extent to which it is true that there is a divinity that shapes our ends, and to which at the same time it is true that a man is the architect of his own fortune, are both curiously exemplified in the life of A. N. Towne. His career affords a striking illustration of the power of self-help. For his success he owed the least to others. But fortunately there was a field for him, in which he could attain, perhaps, the highest and best development of which he was capable, a sphere for which his talents were peculiarly adapted. In the fitness of things he was drawn to it; restless and unsatisfied in all other work, he passed from one occupation to another rapidly, so rapidly that the person nearest to him, and most interested in him, recalled with difficulty the different kinds of labor he engaged in before he entered that life for which nature appears to have

predisposed him — transportation. He began his existence simultaneously with that of the transportation of persons and property by rail in this country. Apparently he had but slight control over the circumstances that led him into his life-work. In this, it may be said, was the shaping of his ends by a power beyond him, working through a force in him the ulterior effect of which he could not fashion or foresee. Yet being once brought into the activity destined for him, he was clearly left to his own agency and free will ; for if it be correct to say of any man, it can be truthfully recorded of him, that he made himself what he was.

This, in brief, is the life which in some of its features resembles others, but which in its individuality is distinct from most others. It is a force the origin, development, and energy of which it is proposed to enquire into on account of its inherent interest and usefulness in its identification with the history of the Pacific slope. In order to derive the greatest benefit from his experience, he should be as thoroughly comprehended as practicable ; in order to appreciate what he accomplished we must know how he was endowed by nature, what qualities he inherited, and above all how he employed his talent and discharged the responsibilities peculiar to himself.

The chief value of biography is not that it excites in us admiration of superlative virtues and achievements, but in this, that it makes known to us how worthy men have lived, and reveals to us how, to the extent of our opportunities and ability, we may go and do likewise. To this end we must know them, sufficiently well at least to realize that however superior they may be to us in those things in which they excel, they are wonderfully like ourselves after all. Such knowledge of our subject establishes a fellowship of interest, and creates a bond of sympathy, without which there is no influence for good of one life upon another. Let us start out therefore and

travel with him, seeing the world as he sees it, thinking as he thinks, until we know him as he is. To thus grasp another life is to assimilate it and infuse it into our own.

In the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, memoranda of the Towne family date back to the year 1274, when they are found to have been established at Alvely, a village in Shropshire, England. The lineage is traced through succeeding generations to about 1640, when the first of the name known in the annals of American history, who left descendants, was an inhabitant of Salem, Massachusetts. He was William Towne, whose marriage with Joanna Blessing was solemnized, March 25, 1620, in the massive old church at Alvely, founded in 1123, dedicated to St Nicholas in 1251, and still retaining the same name. They were the progenitors of most of the Townes in the United States.

The birthplace of A. N. Towne was Dresser Hill, in Charlton, Worcester county, Massachusetts. The eldest of nine children, five sons and four daughters, he was of the eighth generation in the line of descent from William and Joanna (Blessing) Towne. His father was Nelson Parker Towne, and his mother, Julia A. Dresser, who were married September 10, 1828. Her descent, also, four generations removed, was from the Townes. They appear to have been a fairly long-lived, laborious, and self-sustaining race, blessed with numerous children, but not with any surplus of what is termed the world's goods. This however was the rule in New England, a necessitous region, in which the difficulties of living made the people economical, strong, shrewd, and independent. Their rigorous climate and unfriendly soil hardened them and made them a community of workers. Labor, among them, was—as it ought to be everywhere and at all times—honorable, and idleness a reproach. But their success in finally making a country rich,

which was naturally poor, was not altogether due to manual toil ; their triumph was, also, intellectual.

In the realm of practical and useful inventions, they were without equals in the world. Stern, and at times fanatical in their religion, these old puritans had in them the best stuff out of which to make a nation ; without fear of man or beast, with thews of steel and the will to labor for conscience' sake against whatever odds, they were schooled in adversity, trials, and hardship, and by virtue of this discipline became, to my mind, notwithstanding all their angles and radical tendencies, the soundest characters and the best citizens the world ever saw. While we are indebted to other parts of the United States and to Europe for excellent men as participants in the progress and civilization of the Pacific coast, I believe that, all things considered, we owe more to New England for enterprise, intelligence, and character than to all other regions on the earth together.

It was from this stock that A. N. Towne was descended. His father was a cabinet-maker and a mill-wright by trade, but later, and until his death, was engaged almost wholly in the erection of paper mills in the New England states. He had unusual skill and ingenuity in mechanics, a talent which his son inherited. He lived on a farm, to the cultivation of which he devoted a few months in the year, being employed the rest of the time away from home in mechanical work. He left his father's house when quite young to go out and earn a living for himself, so that his education, as to books, was limited to the rudiments of the common school. The knowledge he required for use he got from practical experience. He was a master of whatever he undertook as builder or machinist, thorough in the control of men working under him and efficient in carrying out his contracts. His executive ability was quite marked. Well informed in whatever concerned him, clear-headed, tenacious of purpose and fond of work, his energies

were spent in the maintenance of his large family. He was liberal-minded, well-balanced, and rather free from prejudices in matters of opinion. He entertained decided views, but was circumspect in expression. He was a democrat in politics ; in religion, though he embraced no creed, he led a moral and exemplary life. Admirably self-controlled, he was temperate in all things, and deliberate ; conservative in speech, his tones were soft and his words conciliatory. Avoiding arrogance in the management of his affairs, all who came in contact with him were made to feel at ease in his company. He counselled his boys to put up with almost any sacrifice, except the compromise of honor, rather than to engage in irrational strife, but if once involved in a struggle, to hold out to the end ; yet solicitude to obviate calamity was such as to render him extremely cautious. He was of gentle temper and averse to contention ; his policy was conservative in the settlement of dispute or difference.

Alban, being the eldest of his children, the trust reposed in him was such that their relations were more like those of brothers than of father and son. The boy revered and admired the man, and learned from him the invaluable lessons of self-government, temperance, and the policy of pacification ; and he was wise enough to take them to heart and profit by them. But in certain essential characteristics the son differed from the father. The temperament of the father was restful and conservative, of the son nervous and aggressive. Thoroughly vitalized in body and mind, his energies focused to the point of conflagration, the force that distinguished him was of the kind that is bold, looking less at intervening obstacles than to the purpose beyond them. His high strung nervous organization he inherited from his mother, whom he resembled strikingly in physique, and even more strikingly in mental attributes. Her family name appears among those who composed the officers of the first organization of Charlton, the town

in which she was born, and, for a considerable period was extensively known in its history for enterprise and skill in business affairs. Her grandfather, Major Moses Dresser, was an officer of distinction in the war of the revolution. To her eldest son she transmitted her energy, her will force, and her progressive temper. She was not ambitious in the ordinary sense of the word, that is, possessed of an inordinate craving for superiority over others, but, thoroughly vitalized in all her nature, she was impelled by an inward principle to strive for the greatest excellence of which she was capable. Her whole care was the welfare of her family. Her resoluteness in doing what she was convinced was right, regardless of the opinions of others to the contrary, and her sound judgment combined with other sterling traits to make an exceptionally strong individuality. Deriving from her his laudable aspirations, to her training and influence was largely due the formation of his character. The sphere in which she lived was limited, but her capabilities were such that she could have adapted herself to any position that a wife or mother may be called from humble surroundings to occupy in the highest society of our nation. Her responsibilities were great, as it was, and she did her whole duty; nothing better can be said of any woman. Nor were her labors fruitless. Her children rise up to call her blessed. Her virtues and her undeveloped talents reproduced and brought into exercise by them are a perpetual memorial in her honor, for her spirit will live in them and in their children's children.

Alban, who resembled her more closely than any other of her sons, owed to her chiefly the traits that distinguished him and enabled him to earn an eminent place among men. Her sense of duty to her husband and children was her paramount consideration. Conscious from early childhood of the value and necessity of labor in a woman's sphere, she was always employed in some useful work. She impressed upon

her children the importance and dignity of labor, and she used often to say, that idleness bears no fruit, while labor carries with it the assurance of safety and happy results. The household work she herself performed, the daughters helping as they became old enough. She was supreme in the discipline of her household, governing, however, with reason and love. The virtues which were exemplified in her life, and made her presence and example felt and remembered, were reflected in her handsome, cheerful face. Her large, lustrous black eyes seemed, in their depths, an index to the generous impulses which inspired her in her domestic relations. In their little troubles the children all sought her for consolation and counsel; she heard them patiently always, and never sent them away without comfort. The greatest of all her trials, the death of her husband, came upon her when she was yet comparatively young, leaving her with nine children, the eldest less than twenty years old and the youngest an infant, with but slender means of support. She met the responsibility thus thrust upon her by this cruel bereavement with rare courage, and calmly set about in a practical way to make the best of the situation. Those of her children who were old enough to work, she placed where they could sustain themselves, and in their feeble way aid her toward the support of the younger ones. She remained single and devoted herself to her children, all of whom, except two daughters who died early, she had the satisfaction of seeing happily settled in life, the boys holding honorable and lucrative positions. She died July 16, 1870, in her sixtieth year.

Dresser Hill, situated on an eminence commanding an unbroken and picturesque view for miles around, was a village of farms. The country, spread out as far as the eye could reach in hills and valleys, cultivated to the highest point by the genius of necessity and thrift, offered always an agreeable view, while in the season of verdure the scene was enchanting. As

in the rest of New England, the winters were long and cold, leaving but a few months of spring and summer for farming. The atmosphere was stimulating, physically and mentally. There was nothing in the climate to enervate, but everything to season the body for endurance, while the demands and the promptings were all in the direction of labor. By the activity of Major Dresser, the Hill had become noted as a resort for military reviews for all the surrounding country. These gatherings were occasions for hearty greetings and merry making. Within a furlong of where A. N. Towne was born, lived a maternal great uncle, Harvey Dresser, who owned the largest and most fertile farm in the township, on which there was considerable activity. The spacious dwelling in which he resided comprised a hotel, a general store, a Masonic hall, where also local gatherings were held; there were his manufacturing establishments, in which, and on his farm, he employed a large number of men. He was engaged in the manufacture of stage coaches, then in great demand, wagons of all kinds, harness, and furniture. There Alban's father was for years employed as the head of the cabinet department. At Southbridge, three miles distant, his uncle Dresser owned and conducted a large cotton factory, employing many operatives. Mr Dresser was one of the most active and progressive men in Worcester county. On Sunday morning he would call out two or three four-horse coaches, driving one himself, for those who desired to attend church, which was three miles distant. His family often visited friends in Boston, Worcester, and Providence, but did not mingle to any great extent with the people of the neighborhood, most of whom were hard-working farmers and mechanics. The wages of working men at that time were low, and being compelled to the most rigid economy, they knew but little of social intercourse.

Alban's father was a poor man, but he maintained

a comfortable home, in which the necessities of living were ample, but luxuries almost unknown. It was a nursery of self-denial and frugality, in which virtues are the seeds of wealth. The house in which he was born was a small building, with furnishings and appointments of the simplest nature; but it was a well-ordered, New England home, in which the parents were kind and the children tractable.

The boy's doing of chores began long before his childhood ended, but he was alert and predisposed to work. His earliest impulse was to be among the men in the shops; the workings of the machinery delighted him; any mechanical appliance interested him. This showed the trend of his thoughts, but he was to travel long and far away from his inclination; until he got back to it he would not be content.

His school days, begun when he was seven years old, were not long or certain. After he moved from his birthplace, he could attend only in the summer, as the nearest school-house was at a considerable distance; and when he was older and able to work, he could be spared only in the winter. His tuition, therefore, did not go beyond the rudiments. He might have learned more than he did, for he was apt in whatever interested him, but it is unlikely that his individuality was considered in the tuition he received; besides, his mind was not on books, and the lessons given him were not made attractive. His thoughts were on business, and he wanted to be actually at work, in which he was always happy. He was a natural easy worker. His knowledge was to be acquired in the school of practice, from which he could look back to discover that he was applying principles, self-taught, which make books. He educated himself in what his vocation required him to understand, and his mind being disciplined to reflection, which is the highest aim in the tuition of the schools, he acquired the ability to investigate. His reflections took form, in his later years, in substantial contributions to the literature of transportation. Self-

help, with observation and experience, will solve any practical problem, especially when the worker finds himself employed upon what his tastes lead him to and his faculties fit him for. With patience to labor and to wait, and a will that nothing short of annihilation can break, what mountain is there that cannot be removed! Young Towne threw his whole soul into whatever he undertook; the venture might fail, but he would not. As a lad he gave evidence of invincible spirit. He was bantered to jump a rail fence; other boys had made the effort and gave it up. He tried it, but fell and hurt himself badly; he was confined to the house for several days by the bruises he had received, but this did not deter him from a second attempt; he fell again and bruised himself worse than before. As soon as he was able to get out he made another trial, regardless of the admonitions of his mother, and by a supreme effort cleared the barrier.

His first ideas of the necessity to prepare for self-maintenance came when, in his eighteenth year, his father sent him to a neighboring town to learn the carpenter's trade. The almost universal custom in New England at that time of learning a trade, was among the customs which made the people of that section independent at home, and rendered them superior as pioneers and builders in the west. They knew, as a rule, one trade by apprenticeship, sometimes several, and could turn their hands readily to whatever was to be done. It was a matter of course, therefore, that Alban should go out at an early age to learn to make a living for himself. By applying himself to it one summer, he had learned the shoemaker's trade fairly well, and he was already familiar with his father's tools, but he did not lean very strongly toward the carpenter's bench, and he turned from it, with his father's consent. He preferred to go to Webster, an adjoining town, to live with his mother's brother, Horace Dresser, who conducted a large and profitable business, employing from sixty to seventy

painters during the spring, summer, and autumn months. He spent two years there, and learned the painter's trade. This was not what his ambition seemed to seek, but he persevered and mastered the business. Mrs Dresser was a woman of genial, sunny disposition, and fond of Alban and his parents, and those were bright and happy days which were passed in her household. During four months he went to school; the other eight months, he worked hard from early to late for eight dollars a month, receiving his yearly board, however, in addition. He worked shoulder to shoulder with his uncle's men, doing as much as any one of them, perhaps more, for he could not bear to be outdone; but he was a boy and a nephew, hence his pay was less. At the close of his apprenticeship, when nineteen years of age, his uncle's partner not being disposed to increase his compensation to what he thought was fair and right, the young painter opened up an active competition with them, and did a very satisfactory business. Though at first strong and hardy, working in paints impaired his health to such an extent that he was compelled to give it up. It annoyed him to have to do so, for though he was not content to be a painter, it was a blow to his pride to abandon anything he had undertaken; besides, he would have to find another means of support. He practised the closest economy. All the money he could save, which was but little, he gave to his mother, or invested for her and the children in wearing apparel, or other necessities, whenever he could find a bargain; he was always on the lookout, and apt in discovering such opportunities. The meager assistance he could render them was possible because his own wants were few. Avoiding all extravagance, he could enjoy only the luxury of self-denial. The decease of his father, November 24, 1846, brought upon him a serious responsibility, but the evidence is that he recognized his duty as eldest son, and as far as he was able assumed the place of father to his

younger brothers and sisters. They looked up to him, all being guided largely by his counsel and advice, and his mother was comforted by his loyalty in her affliction.

While attending school, during his apprenticeship as painter, he met Caroline Amelia Mansfield, daughter of Asahel Mansfield, one of the pioneers of the town of Webster. Her mother, whose maiden name was Caroline Blodgett, like her father, was of early puritan stock. Her brothers were all powerful men, and staunch in their religion. The last of them to die was the Reverend Doctor Constantine Blodgett, who was for fifty years pastor of the same congregational church at Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

In his love-making the young painter was as persistent and strenuous as in all else, as the man who would eminently succeed must be, and Miss Mansfield became his wife. On retiring from painting he entered into business with his uncle in the sale of paints, oils, and drugs, and at the expiration of the time of copartnership, one year, he accepted for a twelve-month a position as clerk in a general dry goods and grocery store, at a salary of \$275, at the end of which time he found that it had cost him \$280 to live. This would not do; but first he must square his account, for he had an antipathy to debt. Looking around among his effects, he selected some stencil plates used in sign-painting, which he sold for five dollars, and thus made himself even on the year. Nevertheless, with such wages, it was not a bad showing. What young married couple, now-a-days, anywhere in the country, could think of keeping house on less than twenty-four dollars a month! The Townes did it, and they did not suffer; it was a principle with them to live within their means. Mrs Towne, in the good old New England fashion, had learned how to do every kind of household work, and instead of being ashamed of it, to feel an honest pride in her ability to do it. Those only who have been called on to economize

rigidly, and have taken a pride in doing so, for a worthy purpose, can realize what may be accomplished by saving, or the satisfaction resulting therefrom. Of course, that was the first year of marriage, some of the expenses of which had been anticipated and provided for in advance. It would be a good year to look back upon as a beginning; as a reminiscence only, however, would it be interesting. There must be something better for Mr Towne to do, and he would go and find it.

He went to Worcester, the county seat, sixteen miles distant, and obtained work in a paper-hanging establishment, where he acted as clerk, and in the season for it, went out and laid paper, the knack of which he had learned along with painting. It was not work that demanded a high degree of skill; but it was his ambition to do whatever he was engaged in to the best of his ability, and to improve it. He introduced new methods in the process, and did more and better work than his fellow laborers.

He was employed in this way, at a much better salary, for eighteen months, when he found an opportunity to go into partnership with O. F. Batchelor, at South Danvers, later called Peabody, in a miscellaneous merchandize business, the latter putting in capital, and the former labor and experience. Their trade was good and paid well, but hard times came in 1855. It was a period of general financial distress, and many wealthy firms went under. The Danvers firm felt the stringency, and this proved to be the turning point in the career of the junior partner. One day, after he had been in Danvers fifteen months, he announced to his wife that he had sold out of Batchelor and company; had taken out the largest part of his interest in goods that could be best spared from the stock without injury to the other partner, and the remainder in money—a small sum—and was going west. This meant to Illinois. To go so far—it was a great distance then—into a comparatively new region, seemed

to his friends a step in the dark, but he had made up his mind, and it was not in his nature to turn away from or to be argued out of, a deliberately formed plan. Previous to this he and his brother, L. W. Towne, had talked the matter over, and it was agreed that the latter should go forward and the former would follow in time. The financial stringency caused him to go earlier than he had intended. His brother, a locomotive engineer, had gone to work for the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railroad company, and a brother four years his senior, H. A. Towne, had followed him and taken the place of fireman on his engine. A. N. Towne's idea was to take his small stock of goods out west, and start again in the mercantile business. He spent several days in studying the business situation and prospects at Chicago, where he had intended to settle, but concluded to run down to Galesburg to visit his brothers, thinking there might be such a business opportunity there in the mercantile line as he would like. He did not find at Galesburg any encouragement in that line of business; and we find in his first letter to his wife from this place, the startling news that the assistant superintendent of the Chicago Burlington and Quincy who had taken a liking to his brothers had offered him a place on the road, "and" said he, "I may go to railroading." "Well" thought Mrs Towne, "railroading! what will it be next?" It seemed to her a revolution in their affairs, like beginning life all over again, and so it was, truly. It was a sudden and radical change of base, which, made by a man of ordinary spirit or caliber, would have indicated vacillation. Mr Towne had succeeded fairly well in business, all things considered, but what could he hope for in railroading? It was something he had never tried, and it would take a long time to learn it, and promotion was slow and uncertain. Was it possible that he could make his way up through an army of old and experienced men preceding him? So far, surely, it was a battle against odds; besides, only a

few bright men, strive as they may, reach the high official positions in railroading. The rest wear out their lives in subordinate service on small pay. But in every sphere of useful activity there is opportunity for conquest. Human life is a conflict, in which as a rule the fittest survive. But Mr Towne never pretended that he went to the brake foreseeing what it would lead to. He required immediate employment as the means of a livelihood, and his brothers were already on the road. This was the simple beginning.

I can readily picture to my mind merchant Towne at Galesburg, in the act of laying aside his good apparel, for he was always neat and genteel in his dress, for a suit in consonance with his new life. Twenty-six years of age, five feet seven inches tall, weighing say 155 pounds, symmetrically built, small hands and feet, dark complexion, his whole figure expressed nervous energy. There was life in every movement. His was not a tell-tale face, but beneath the smile that made his great black eyes luminous, there was an unobtrusive manifestation of pluck and will, such as exercised with unfaltering purpose by men otherwise strong furnish the surprises of history. Extra and regular brakeman, and extra and regular conductor on the freight train; extra and regular conductor on the passenger; yard and train master; assistant superintendent; general superintendent. Through all these grades in railroad operation he passed with remarkable rapidity; yet the swiftness of his rise was not for want of thoroughness; it was by virtue of the thoroughness with which he mastered the work in grade after grade. One man may focus more vitality upon his work in a day than others laboring by his side develop in many days. It is as though his spirit took form in his calling. From every engagement perfected he moved forward to another, projecting his energies with accumulated force upon problems evolved one out of the other, in the unfolding of whatever he undertook; so that

every day's work, completely finished and put behind him, was important not only of itself, but as another step toward the consummation of whatsoever he was capable. This is one way of putting it. Mr Towne modestly explained : " I did everything there was for me to do, just as well as I could." The sole means of his preferment was his industry and masterful spirit ; his advancement was purely in recognition of his efficiency. He had no rich or influential friends to coach or even encourage him. He came into railroading a stranger, with no one to help him but himself. The friends he made, who were serviceable to him, were the outgrowth of the merit of his service, and his personal character ; his holding of important positions was independent of all friendly feeling for him on the part of those in authority, except that he endeared himself to them in the manner intimated. Personal influence in this avocation, as in every other sphere of life, is often conspicuously more potent than efficiency, but in this instance the order of precedence was rational. The world is still deceived with ornament, as Shakespeare says ; but the feature of Mr Towne's career was that his elevation was not due to the interposition of friends. It was earned against troubles such as a man must encounter who outstrips others in an open field in which competition is ceaseless. Jealousy, which is an infirmity inherent in small souls, and mars the nobility of some great minds as well, is said to be the cause of more strife and friction in the business of transportation than in almost any other. The most unreasonable and disagreeable feature of the opposition against which Mr Towne had to contend, at every step in his preferment, was this weakness, which may be fairly termed a vice among his competitors. But by going forward in the course which he believed to be right, he rose superior to all his jealous rivals. He dominated every place he filled because he made himself indispensable. To one who gives

up his life to special work what gratification is there more substantial! How different from unearned preferment, due to adventitious circumstances, favoritism, intrigue, or whatever other means than fitness, pure and simple! His friends in the service, apart from pleasant personal relations, were those who promoted his advancement because it was to their interest to do so. He did not scheme for preferment; and as is often the case with men engrossed in their work he was not a student of his own excellence; he did not place so great an estimate on himself as others who carefully observed his movements.

Henry Hitchcock, assistant superintendent at Galesburg, with whom Towne was directly related in his duties as a brakeman and conductor, regarded him as a desirable acquisition, and put him forward as fast as possible, because the usefulness of such men is greater in the wider sphere. Says an old railroad associate: "During Mr Towne's early connection with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy as a freight conductor, he was often placed in embarrassing positions by reason of limited means of communication with his superior officers. At that early period few trains were moved by telegraph, as at present. Several times when he had to encounter obstacles on the road, caused by high water, his and other trains being hemmed in by washouts, he developed extraordinary resources in overcoming these difficulties; he often relieved not only his own train, but the trains of the other conductors that followed his lead, and thereby saved his company from serious loss. Cases of which this was an example was what led to his promotion."

The general superintendent, also, kept him in view, as the following incident illustrates: One day, while in charge of the west-bound passenger train, at an intermediate station a telegram from Colonel Hammond was handed to him, ordering him to return immediately to Chicago. It was characteristic of him to obey. He did not ask what he was wanted for or

protest that he could not leave his train on the way and start back at once ; but he arranged with the conductor of the inbound train to exchange with him, and though he had been up the previous night, he started back on an all-night run. Reaching Chicago early in the morning, worn out by loss of sleep, and not knowing what his sudden recall might portend, he reported at headquarters, where Colonel Hammond informed him in his gruff way, in a few words, that he wanted an assistant in charge of the train and station service. Towne protested that he had no experience except in running trains, and did not know what the duties of the office would be ; but the superintendent had measured his man, and would listen to no doubts on his part. He went to work as train-master, and in a short time had straightened out the tangles in the rapidly growing transfer business between the Burlington and the connecting eastern lines, and was earning his salary many times over by stopping the losses caused by delays to traffic in transit. Another surprise awaited him next in the notification of his appointment as assistant superintendent, followed later by promotion to the rank of assistant general superintendent. Within eighteen months from the day he was set to braking on the top of a freight train, he outranked the man who gave him the position ; with whom, nevertheless, his relations continued, up to the latter's death, to be of the most friendly and cordial nature. He was with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy eleven years, when he accepted the superintendency of the Chicago and Great Eastern railway company. He held this position for a year ; but owing to the financial embarrassments of the road, which rendered the labor of management hopeless of the success that he required for his satisfaction, he returned to the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railroad, where he was welcomed again as assistant general superintendent. In the meanwhile, he had been the recipient of very tempting offers. Colonel

Hammond, who had now become general superintendent of the Union Pacific, urged him to come and aid him in the management of that road; but there were reasons why he preferred to retain his identification with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy.

At the end of another year, however, he was offered the general superintendency of the Central Pacific. Mr Huntington, the vice-president, who had also been the financial agent of the company in the east from the inception of the road, and exercised practically unrestricted authority for his associates and himself, was fond of telling how he secured the services of Mr Towne. Said he: "When our road was built, I began to look around for a superintendent to relieve Mr Crocker, whose whole time was occupied in matters pertaining to the construction of other roads. I inquired closely about a number of men who had a reputation for efficiency in railroading, and finally settled on a dozen, including Mr Towne, whom I carefully followed in all his movements for about a year. I finally concluded that I had found the man that we wanted, and wrote to Mr Towne to drop in and see me. A few days afterward he called on me at my office in New York. I told him that a superintendent was wanted for the Central Pacific railroad. He was then receiving \$5,000 a year. He asked what salary the Central Pacific would pay.

I replied: "We will give you \$5,000, Mr Towne."

"Well, I am getting that now."

"It is a big salary to speak of, Mr Towne, but suppose I should offer you something more, would you come?"

"I cannot go till I have seen my people and talked it over with them."

"Well, now, when you go home, talk to your people, and write me what you will come for."

"This Mr Towne promised; and when he was ready to go, I walked out with him. We stopped at Pine and Broome streets, as we talked, and I said:

‘Now, I am going to get a man, and when you go back to Chicago will you talk the matter over with your principals, and write what you will come for?’

“Yes, I will.”

“We continued on across the river to the depot in Jersey city. I waited until the train was ready to start, when I again said : ‘Now, I believe we understand it; when you get out there and talk with your people, you will telegraph what you will come for?’”

“Yes.”

“Mr Towne talked with his employers, and told them he would have to telegraph something to me, and he mentioned \$10,000 as the salary he would require, but they replied they would give him as much as that. He telegraphed that he would come for \$13,000 in gold, then at a premium of over thirty per cent. My answer was, ‘Come.’ Since then, September 1869, Mr Towne has remained with us; the directors of three of the leading roads of the United States have made him flattering offers, but it would be difficult for them to get him, as I assume that he is as well satisfied with us as we with him. His present salary is large, as I presume everyone knows. We have found him to be all that was said to commend him to us. We feel implicit confidence in his management. The history of his identification with us will show that he has been appreciated.”

To be thus sought out from among, and preferred above, all the distinguished railroad superintendents of the United States, was a testimonial to his mastery of the transportation problem most substantial. Born at the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the country’s prosperity, it has been his fortune to live through a period marked by great events, and by material progress unexampled. As a factor in one of the principal agencies underlying this development, he passed, in his identification with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railroad, nearly fourteen of the most active and impressionable years of his manhood, dur-

ing which period he enjoyed the acquaintance and profited by the society of the most distinguished men of the time, statesmen, manufacturers, merchants, and railroad men. Among the last named, with whom he was closely associated in the active management while identified with this great property, were John Van Nortwick, James F. Joy, J. M. Walker, C. G. Hammond, Robert Harris, Henry Hitchcock, and Amos T. Hall. To these able men and good friends particularly he feels indebted in a measure for his later success. He came into this new field in the far west ripe in years and rich in the practical knowledge of his work, and fortified for control by self-discipline. He had graduated from one of the greatest carrying lines of the northwest, in which, having made himself familiar with all the details of every department, he was master of the whole. There was not a man on the Pacific coast, nor, I may add, is there one now, better qualified, to organize and operate the first overland railroad; the school in which he was educated has ceased to exist. Such schooling as he had acquired was possible only when railroading was comparatively new, when a company's lines were few and short, and its operations were so limited that the workings of each department could be learned in one life time by practice. Such training now is out of the question. The most that can fairly be expected of a railroad man of the present, on the great lines, is that he shall thoroughly comprehend the details of a single department. In 1855, when Towne began railroading, and there were but 18,374 miles of road in the United States, the superintendent was the chief official, as the duties of getting and moving the traffic, looking after the machinery and rolling stock, track, bridges, and buildings, together with shaping the policy and commercial affairs of the road, all devolved upon him. Through the consolidation of the many small roads into the great carrying lines of the country, this has all been changed. The

controlling and directing spirit in the carrying out of the policy dictated by the president and board of directors is the general manager, who finds it necessary to create departmental duties, assigning to each department a chief distinguished in his special branch of study or labor. Mr Towne having served continuously from the age of twenty-six, became expert in the details of the several departments, and was recognized in his profession as one of the old school of thoroughly educated railroad men, and in later years was one of the few surviving representatives of this régime.

The construction of the first great transcontinental line of road through a country with doubtful resources, and over mountain ranges of so formidable an aspect, required courage, enterprise, and financial ability; and to successfully and profitably manage and operate such a road when completed, required a man of more than ordinary capacity; one of the first in all that goes to make a thoroughly trained business man; one who not only understood but was familiar with the laws of trade and commerce as affecting the procurement and the movement of traffic.

The Sacramento syndicate, deep, broad men, unquestionably the greatest and most successful road builders the world has ever known, were engrossed, each in his own sphere, in the extension of their system by the construction of additional roads; so that no one of them could be drawn from his department to operate the Central Pacific and its branches without impairing the completeness and diminishing the force of the original association—a combination unsurpassed in its efficiency as a whole by reason of the peculiar talent and adaptability of each of its members for the performance of his individual functions.

Mr Towne arrived in Sacramento at a period in the history of the Central Pacific when it offered a great open field for trained men of talent. The

people of California who came into the country by teams or by steamers, and whose freight was transported through the same channels, knew little beyond ocean and inland water carriage, and mule trains for packing over the mountains. Isolated by geographical position, they were unfamiliar with the more modern rail transportation agencies. And they did not have an opportunity to learn and take advantage of the improved railway service growing out of competition between many lines struggling for the greatest share of that which goes to make the business of rail transportation a success. When he reached this coast he found himself thrown among men of power, influence, and wealth, but whose tendencies were naturally provincial, as they had not had the opportunity to see what others were doing whose existence in the business of railroading depended upon their ability to get traffic and make it profitable. Naturally, there were jealousies and enmities engendered among the minor officials under his direction, working hand in hand against him, to thwart the efforts of the stranger coming among them from a remote section of the country, whose sole endeavors, nevertheless, were to introduce in the immature service, promising innovations which his former experience had taught him would greatly better the condition of things. A relentless opposition followed, and his life was threatened repeatedly by his foes, as his strict discipline and the requirements of his methods were not to their liking, until finally some of the more formidable of his opponents were summarily dismissed from the service. Being of a cautious and secretive disposition, he kept his own counsel, preserved a complete insight into the immense business of the company, and by following out a line of policy, strictly in accordance with his early teaching, he succeeded in overcoming the many barriers born of ignorance, bigotry, and prejudice, which his antagonists never lost an opportunity to place in his path. His success in these matters

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greatly strengthened the faith the owners had placed in him ; and his friends have often stated that there was no man in the country who could have passed through what he did, and accomplished so much in the face of such organized and determined opposition.

Matthew Hale Smith, in his book, entitled *Successful Folks*, in which he presents the biographies of distinguished business men of the United States, refers as follows to the beginning of Mr Towne's career on the Pacific coast. "The employés were more amused than startled at the advent of the new superintendent, a quiet, pleasant, gentlemanly spoken man. The executive ability for which Mr Towne had become celebrated began to work. There was no noise, no bluster, no threats. Turbulent and unruly men somehow slipped out and loyal men came in. The government was out of sight. The road assumed a movement not unlike that of a well-oiled locomotive." From the date of his inauguration, when the company's system was small compared with what it is now, being then less than twelve hundred miles in extent, he was the working head in its management. Until 1882 his title was general superintendent. About that time the Southern and Central Pacific companies having become united under one system, the office of general manager was created for him with enlarged powers, after which, with the added authority and responsibilities, first of third and then of second, vice-presidency. From the start he was an essential part of the institution in its outward and physical, and in its inner and intellectual existence. It was important, coming as he did into a new field of railroading, where the men who had constructed and now controlled the road, desired his operating experience, that he should possess a knowledge of mechanism and a familiarity with the construction and repairs of rolling stock, and that he should suggest and introduce improvements in all branches of the service ; but this is only one item

of the many ordinary requirements to which he had to respond.

In order to protect the interests and rights of those whose property was entrusted to his management, he must have a thorough knowledge of men, so as to be able to select efficient and reliable assistants as heads of the various departments, who are in constant communication with him on questions of complicated detail and matters of concern transpiring at all times over the entire system under his charge. He must exploit every avenue of earning, and know the cost of operating, so as to secure the maximum revenue at the minimum of expense ; he must be familiar with the wants of the trade of all sections of the country through which his lines run, and secure all possible traffic ; he must encourage and develop business, regulate rates, provide means of transportation at all times, and direct in making and changing schedules : his judgment must be exercised to decide, as it becomes necessary, as to additional stations, tracks, buildings, rolling and floating stock, and repairs of the same ; he must inspect and pass upon important vouchers, examine reports, and inquire into the causes of accidents involving loss of life or damage to persons or property, and fairly and intelligently, and sometimes summarily, dispose of such cases ; he must give attention to the complaints of the patrons of the lines, and listen patiently to many senseless murmurs and demands ; he is compelled to dispose of all those who press their claims for favors to the exclusion of others ; he has also to meet deputations of merchants, farmers, mechanics, and others, and consider their propositions, which are often of a nature demanding privileges and concessions that are inconsistent with the policy of the company and the laws of equity. He has weighty matters to lay before, and sometimes to urge with, the president or board of directors, with whom he is in daily and hourly communication. How economical of his time must he be when every minute counts, and yet he must

be ready at every call! He must understand railroad law, the statutes affecting railroads, contracts, etc. His judgment must enter into every matter in which the interest of the road is involved, directly or indirectly. He stands as its advocate and its defender against all that host from the outside world, composed mainly of ingenious and pushing tradesmen, who carry on a perpetual and determined campaign for the procurement of inequitable concessions, to whom a slight reduction in rates is often of sufficient importance to impel them to make a life and death struggle to secure it, however injurious to their competitors in business or impracticable it may be for the railroad to concede to their demands or yield to their importunities. Such concessions as the road is enabled to make to all without distinction, from time to time in consonance with the requirements of its policy, from a business point of view, they never appreciate fully, if at all, and they cry unceasingly for more. The performance of these functions is in brief a summary of the railroad manager's office, but the man must be merged into the functionary. His personality must give character to his office; there is scarcely a duty devolving upon him that is altogether perfunctory. The greatest power being the result of the least resistance, friction in his management must be kept at the minimum. He must be self-governed in order to govern others; he must withal be a philosopher and a diplomat, holding sway by moral force.

Transportation is one of the most intricate studies of the age, differing from all others in this, that it involves more that directly concerns mankind, and becomes continuously more complex along with the civilization it promotes. Unlike the study of law, medicine, or theology, it is not a profession to be practised within the limits of precedents established. The managers of the great carrying lines must be governed entirely by the exigences of each particular

case, calling for the exercise of independent judgment, in order that they may promote the development of outlying places by the extension of lines of road, and that they may meet the ever-changing conditions of trade and commerce incident to railroad and ocean competition in traffic to and from the markets of the world. Thus, it may be said, is the character of the transportation organism indexed, its necessities and powers as a business institution reflected. As such merely, its structure and functions cannot be appreciated or understood without serious and careful study. The skill brought to bear in devising the economics of its internal machinery and of the outward distribution of its force, its genius, exhibited in the control and creation of values, makes it royal among the instrumentalities of commerce and civilization. This is patent to every thoughtful student of industrial history; and yet the railroad which is not considered in its sociological aspect is not understood. It is a most human institution. At every point it acts and is acted upon by the community. The very reason and object of its existence brings it into the most sensitive relations with the public. For its own protection it is at times forced into legislation, law, politics, and society, and therefore becomes a potent factor in them all. In the sphere in which it is legitimately occupied it dominates, and has to dominate in order to advance.

As every man who, having God-given talents, strives rightfully to multiply them, must put forth much of his energy in jostling, because he is jostled, so it is with the railroad. It is not an aggressive institution, though in the process of its expansion as a factor in the general development of the community it may appear to ill-informed or narrow minds in this light. The sentiment manufactured against it by interested persons who influence public opinion, is such that it has become difficult for the people to believe that there is anything good in a railroad. It has been so constantly

held up to popular prepossession as a grasping monopoly, a soulless Shylock, that its enterprise is contorted into aggression, its progress into trespass. Now, putting aside all consideration of the railway as a potent agency in the advancement of the substantial interests of community, contributing to its wealth and giving the means of livelihood to more families than any other; putting out of mind all that it contributes to the comfort and happiness of the whole country, let us without bias ask ourselves why a railroad should be so characterized? Is there any reason why it should be execrated? If its managers are wise will they pursue a policy that is inimical to their patrons? Railroad men have never been charged with lack of shrewdness. They are among our keenest and most progressive citizens. This being conceded, as it must be, and it being conceded also, as is unavoidable, that a railroad depends upon public patronage, at what conclusion do we arrive? *A priori*, that most of this clamor against railroads is false and irrational, which conclusion is confirmed by the general history of transportation. The record shows that from the outset railroad men have appreciated and acted upon the principle that their interests and those of the people are identical. Of all business institutions it is the most sensitive to public opinion. The value of its investments is greater or less in the ratio in which it renders satisfactory service to, and is able to command the confidence and good will of, the public, its patrons. I once heard an eminent railroad man remark in all earnestness: "Why, you have no idea with what sensitiveness and delicacy a railroad guards its attitude toward the community. Scold the boot-black who is polishing your boots, if you please, and he will smile, for he must have your patronage. It is his living, sir, and as it is with him, so it is with the railroads." The Southern Pacific has seldom instituted a law suit against any one, but in the course of many years it has had to defend itself against thou-

sands of suits ! How many of these were just, may be inferred from the fact that the road feels that as a corporation it is always at a disadvantage in the courts of justice, and would rather settle any proper claims against it without recourse to law ; though naturally being once forced into litigation, it will carry the fight to the end in order to maintain its rights. How many of them are instituted on insufficient grounds and for purposes of extortion or blackmail, may also be conjectured when we consider the well-known advantage that plaintiffs enjoy in litigation with a defendant whom the jury, and too often the court, may be predisposed to decide against. The greatest solicitude of the railroad is therefore to avoid litigation. Its ingenuity is taxed to the utmost in order that the possibility of law-suits may be obviated. I once heard a jurist, skilled in the law affecting railroads, and familiar also with the system of railway transportation, say, that a railroad can rarely ever be justly and fairly sued, for the reason that the best energies and vigilance of the management are in constant exercise that there may be no occasion for litigation ; and further that the only reason why a railroad is not practically perfect in all its operations is because of the unforeseen and inevitable defects of material and the fallibility of man. A railroad is not independent nor its officials arrogant, as is often flippantly remarked. Some railroad men may carry themselves haughtily, but their roads must be to a degree subservient, and to the utmost accommodating. Nor do I believe it true that the millionaire railway proprietors or their managers are more arrogant than others of similar power and control. I should rather expect to find them less so, for the reason that the business in which their wealth is invested is essentially conciliatory. Then again, how many persons realize what a trying ordeal railroad officials or employ  s are subjected to, who come directly into contact with the public ? Those who

travel by rail for pleasure are small in number as compared with those who travel because they cannot help it; many of them are irritated or in trouble to start with, and all through their journey are in a hurry. Here again comes jostling of a trying character. It might be supposed that transportation agents thus constantly wrought upon would sooner or later become demoralized; on the contrary, the man is exceptional in railway service who is not patient and self-contained. The manager's care and vigilance are in ceaseless exercise in order that discipline at this point shall be maintained.

Under the most energetic administration the Southern Pacific company's gross earnings have reached \$50,000,000 per annum, an amount barely enough under the most economical management to meet the operating expenses and fixed charges, leaving little or nothing to the shareholders. This alone ought to convince any fair-minded person that it places no unfair burdens upon its patrons; nevertheless, it is often forced into warfare for defence against out-spoken adversaries or scheming combinations. In this as well as in the struggle with the elements of material nature and hostile trade arrayed against his company, the general manager is ever ready in council, and prompt in helping to provide such means of repelling aggression as the policy of safety may require.

The world is as we find it, not as we wish it, and men must be judged in ethics largely from their own point of view, and according to their surroundings. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, the force of which law, in an artificial state of society, is rather confirmed than impaired; if it were not so, legitimacy would have to succumb to illegitimacy. If by Adam all men were made sinners, it follows that the railroad, unregenerated, is not without its demon, and that when it comes to a struggle with those who use fire, it may have no choice of weapons. The road, like all

other roads, and all men, has an unwritten history which will never be recorded, as all who are familiar with the actual, and not sentimental, humanity of affairs will readily recognize as inevitable. There are those who have maintained conspicuous and trying relations, such as these, but have so framed their conduct as to avoid reproach. Perhaps no one so delicately situated as was the general manager of the Southern Pacific company ever sustained less damage to his reputation among the people. While others of great prominence were often criticized for their antagonisms growing out of their relations with the public, sometimes made notorious by the press, with or without justification, his name was never coupled with hurtful charges. That the estimate in which he is held is just appears in this, that so shining a mark could not escape were he amenable to assault.

It is a proud and significant attitude for a man to occupy for so many years, preserving the autonomy of the vast interests intrusted to him and his own reputation intact. The experience of such men is the only source of real knowledge regarding institutions, enterprises, industries, professions; all other information is statistical and spiritless. Their thoughts and work, garnered up and preserved during the generations, constitute the sum of what is known and practised, the wisdom of the past upon which to build for the future. The actual history of transportation as we understand it to-day, has grown up entirely within two generations; hence it is largely made up from the lives of such factors in it as that of Mr Towne. All that is of vital consequence in the annals of practical railroading is an extract from their lives. Learning from those who precede them, they in turn contribute their originality to promote the development and efficiency of their calling; not infrequently they contribute directly, as is true in the case of Mr Towne, to the current literature of their profession.

It would be better for all concerned, those who have their investments in transportation enterprises as well as the public at large, if the railroad problem were better understood. It is one of the most difficult questions of the age to comprehend. Railroad men are not always indisposed to put the community at a disadvantage by means of their superior technical knowledge, while the community is often led to be unjust to the roads through sheer prejudice and ignorance. With this phase of popular aggression Mr Towne is thoroughly familiar. When assistant general superintendent of the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railroad, he was summoned as an expert witness before the first legislative committee ever appointed in Illinois for the purpose of inquiring into the question of governmental regulation of railroads, to give testimony in relation thereto; and as this question was kept constantly before the public, he devoted more or less of his time in appearing before legislative committees, and in preparing arguments in defense of vested rights and against the communistic tendencies of the times, that spirit born of idleness and vice which is not only at war with every privilege that accompanies wealth, but which is irreconcilable even with an honest struggle for bare maintenance. He is a believer in the theory that the unwritten or moral law protecting property rights stands on higher moral ground than even that guaranteed by the constitution as often interpreted by the courts, which law, as he says, being frequently endangered, requires unremitting care and vigilance to preserve it in its integrity.

In a letter suggested by an article in the *Forum* of May 1888, in which he discussed the question of governmental control and interference endangering railroad property, Mr Towne says, "The railroad problem has engrossed the attention of the wisest men of our generation; it has taxed the energy of the law-makers of the various states and the nation

to devise a scheme whereby the roads of the country shall be controlled and operated under some law other than that which governs trade and commerce. Until this sophistry is abandoned, no good will result to the roads or their patrons. The great trouble dates back to the well-known granger legislation. The legislature of Illinois passed acts in its efforts not only to control the rates that should be charged by the various railroads, but also to regulate and fix the compensation that should be received by the warehouse people for elevating and storing grain; thereby depriving not only the roads but the owners of the elevators of all that is desirable or available in the title or possession of property.

“From that time forth there seemed to be no barrier to the reckless exercise of self-will, passion, prejudice, lust, or desire for power to regulate, on the part of either the legislative or judicial departments of the states. And what was still worse, when cases were taken to the high court at Washington, the lower courts were sustained, seemingly not so much in consequence of reverential regard for constitutional principles as because of the influence of popular clamor, at that time running high.

“Following this came the Thurman bill, so called, so greatly affecting the interests I represent, which was on the part of congress a gross and unwarranted assumption of power, vitiating contracts in open violation of the constitution. The principles involved in this and the granger cases, if applied to any other business or industry than ours, would have offered sufficient ground, even in our republican government, for anarchy and revolution; and the writer believes these laws have had more than anything else to do with the creation and the encouragement of the restless spirit of communism among the great majority with us, which is always too ready to assert itself in antagonism to vested rights, when sustained by the least possible legislative or judicial endorsement.

"The doctrine of governmental control, as then understood, having such general recognition, has had its run throughout all the various legislatures of the states, and in congress ; and from which much harm resulted to the roads, and to the people as well, especially to those of Iowa, Wisconsin, and other north-western states.

"The war cry of monopoly raised against the roads had its effect upon the people ; yet a moment's reflection would have taught them that a railroad did not have exclusive command or possession of the article of its dealings, to wit, transportation.

"Open navigation on the one hand, and competing lines on the other, built in season and out, hedge a railroad all around with competition.

"There was a time, not remote, when the raisers of sheep, cattle, and swine prepared the same for the market ; now the butcher and the packer handle and monopolize these great food staples. The canneries of the country monopolize the trade ; and so does the great oil monopoly, not to advance the price of the oils, but to supply us so well as to drive out all competition by furnishing superior articles at reduced prices. Go through the whole schedule of manufactures ; like the railroads, they, too, may be called monopolies, in the distorted sense in which this term is employed, and be alike regulated and controlled. But the serious question is whether it is right and proper that the majority, without interest or ownership, shall control and enjoy the fruits and the labors of others who have cheapened the necessities and the luxuries of life.

"The gross earnings of all the railroads of the United States, those so-called monopolies, for 1887, according to *Poor's Manual*, was \$931,385,154, which if our population were 65,000,000, was a charge of \$14.33 per capita. The amount of money paid out to manufacturers and vendors of intoxicating liquor was not less in comparison for all the benefits

conferred upon the people by the roads would seem almost infinitesimal. Yet the vendors of liquor escape the epithet monopoly which is offensively saddled upon the railroads. Our answer to the oft repeated assertion that the roads do not give value received, is well illustrated and proven by the fact that the New York Central and Hudson River road, running parallel and in competition with the Erie canal, in 1855, carried 114,827,762 tons of freight one mile, earning per ton per mile 3.27 cents, not then considered too much; and in the year 1887 the same road carried 2,704,732,176 tons of freight one mile, earning but .78 cents per ton per mile, and at this time below even this figure, which is now complained of as unreasonable. The history of the roads of the United States, where rates are far below those of European roads, is much the same. The rates charged are barely sufficient to meet the requirements of the roads; in too many cases in this country they fall much below."

In referring to hurtful legislation against the railroads, and especially to the demand of the commissioners under the interstate commerce law, that is, for a general classification of freights, which is a regulation of rates, Mr Towne writes: "The law has caused a world of trouble, and will likely prove disastrous in many cases, because it is impracticable and unjust, not only to the carriers but to their patrons. Some roads endeavoring to work under it have already become nearly bankrupt. The traffic men of the great lines, in general conference, have given the subject of general classification demanded by the commissioners much thought. For more than a year, at intervals, have these men been in conference meetings held in eastern cities, which have resulted in failure to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The country is too large, the topography too varied, the resources too far extended, the conditions of trade and commerce too complex, and the railroad interests gener-

ally too greatly diversified to justly and impartially measure them by the two-cent postage stamp principle, upon which, we are of the impression, the commissioners' idea of a uniform classification may be based. True, two cents for carrying a letter several blocks in a city, and the same price for carrying it three thousand miles, then delivering it, free, many blocks distant from the post office, is a convenience to the public ; but there is no business principle in this, because it is done without just remuneration for the service performed, as a single illustration will show. The government, after dictating its own terms to the railways for carriage of the mails, which is done on fast express trains, and in many cases at less prices than is received for the carrying of freight, shows for the years 1885, 1886, and 1887, a deficiency in carrying of the mails of nearly \$20,000,000, a loss to the nation which is made good by general taxation

“No doubt there is one classification that would be satisfactory to the commissioners, and to the public as well ; it is that of the trunk lines from the great lakes to the Atlantic seaboard. To accept this classification of rates, however, would not yield the far western lines, running through unsettled portions of the country, enough to meet their obligations ; to accept the classification necessary for the existence of the western lines would yield too bountifully for the trunk lines, more than they really need, and more than the people along the lines who are more favorably situated should pay ; hence uniformity in classification is impracticable.

“What safety is there with the rate-making power in the hands of men who have no interest in the property, and who have little appreciation or understanding of the circumstances and conditions surrounding the roads and their business, which must of necessity govern the managers in determining what is just and proper remuneration for the service performed ?

“The commissioners do not seem to take into consideration any of the items of cost of carriage of one road as compared with another. For the sake of illustration: The tons carried one mile on the New York Lake Erie and Western railway for 1886 were equal to 270 per cent of the tons carried for 1887 on the Southern Pacific company's lines. The Pennsylvania united railways of New Jersey, and the Pennsylvania and Erie division of the Pennsylvania for 1886, carried equal to 422 per cent of the tonnage of the Southern Pacific company for 1887. The Lake Shore and Michigan Southern for 1886 carried equal to 149 per cent of the Southern Pacific tonnage for 1887, and the New York Central and Hudson River lines for the same year, 1887, was equal to 253 per cent of that carried by the Southern Pacific.

“Labor, and materials of all kinds, such as ties, lumber, iron, steel, coal for the foundries and blacksmith shops, and everything else we require, cost very much more than in the east, but the most important item entering into this comparison, in the cost of operating, is that of fuel. Per train mile I find it costs but 5.24 cents on the New York Central; 4.20 cents on the New York Lake Erie and Western, and 4.05 cents on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern; the Pennsylvania I think is below either of the others, while with the Southern Pacific, which has no coal on its entire route, the cost for the year 1887 (and it is much more this year) was 21.58 cents per mile run. Our fuel alone costs in some cases over 500 per cent more than it does on the eastern roads. But the most remarkable showing is that the Southern Pacific company's fuel expense of 21.58 cents per mile is 36 per cent greater than that of the New York Central, seven per cent greater than the New York Lake Erie and Western, and 32 per cent greater than the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern's entire locomotive expense, including all expenses of every kind and nature. Furthermore, the long heavy grades which the

Southern Pacific trains have to climb in order to get from the great basin of California over the three several crossings of the Sierra Nevada, make the cost 700 per cent more for train service than on the comparatively level roads taken for the purpose of comparison ; and yet the commissioners would if possible compel the railroads to accept a uniform classification."

In answer to that part of the *Forum's* article advocating governmental control of railroads through expert commissioners, he says: "Consolidation is practicable, possible, and very desirable for the people and the properties, but I do not believe in the practicability of governmental control ; if, however, this is to be, and there are to be railroad experts as suggested by the *Forum*, let a few, not to exceed five, practical men, I should say (as a greater number would be nothing more or less than a town meeting), be selected to execute the laws which shall be consistent with the requirements of the people and the necessities of the roads. It would perhaps be possible for this national commission to fairly divide the competitive traffic and confirm the rates made from time to time by the railroad managers independent of state interference, which rates should be only as high, so nearly as they can determine in advance, as necessary to meet all the requirements, such as fixed charges and operating expenses, plus a fair dividend on the capital stock. Should there be a surplus over and above the requirements, let it be applied to betterments and additions to the property, which would benefit the people ; and should there still be a surplus, then let the national commissioners divide it among the various states, in the proportion as the states may be entitled to it according to the earnings of the lines within their borders.

"All this might tend to purify the atmosphere in our legislative halls, and the prediction be verified that the value of all railroad securities would meet a

material advance in all the markets of the world. This would be a consolidation of interest, pure and simple, brought about by the people and for the people, in which he who owns and he who enjoys the benefits would be, so to speak, joint partners; but government ownership and management, with such an enormous party patronage, and greatly in excess of the present cost of service would not be tolerated by the people."

Further, regarding the efforts to regulate railroads through commissions, in December 19, 1888, Mr Towne addressed a letter to the board of state railroad commissioners of California, in which he presented a convincing argument against the adoption of the so-called western classification, then being strongly urged by the commissioners. After offering a logical array of figures in justification of his position, he concluded his letter in the following general terms: "From the beginning and everywhere, the railroads have been civilizers and distributors of the nation's wealth. They are among, if not the most potent of all agencies in the transformation of outlying, worthless, and uninhabitable regions into empires of population and wealth. They are constantly cheapening their charges for the carriage of persons and property.

"Narrow-minded men say that the railroads are reaching out to control arbitrarily the cost of the necessities of life; they fear that our republican institutions will suffer under the present system of tolerating what they term unequal opportunities. Reflection will convince any fair-minded man that it is these unequal opportunities which make possible the feeding of the hungry millions of Europe from the grain and livestock farms of America. We are told of the decay of agriculture in New England; this is evident; but the low rates the railroads have quoted make possible the profitable cultivation of the lands of the great west, and at the same time give to the New England consumers their food supplies

from farms 2,000 miles away cheaper than they can produce them at home; while, also, other compensating industries are developed among them in which they are profitably occupied. In the progress of transportation, distance becomes less and less an obstacle. Wheat has been taken by rail and ocean from the farms in California to Liverpool at a rate which adds but 2.12 mills to the price of a family loaf of bread, weighing one-half pound: and, on wheat in large quantities, rates from Minnesota to Liverpool have been so low, at times, as to increase the cost of the same loaf but .73 of a mill."

The testimony of Mr Towne, June 20, 1889, before the United States senate committee on our relations with Canada generally, with some supplementary remarks on the fourth and fifth sections of the interstate commerce law, was the most extensive paper from his pen that found its way into print, though on all the points of importance in the economy of transportation his correspondence has been voluminous and continuous from the beginning to the end of his railroad management. By painstaking research he arrived at facts making evident the inroads of the Canadian Pacific railroad upon the commerce and transportation industry of the United States generally, and especially the lines of the Southern Pacific company, whose territory is the most susceptible to such aggression; and then by a masterly process of analysis made the cause of the wrong manifest and pointed out the remedy. I quote from this part of the document a few paragraphs that are freighted with thought and information. In referring to the peculiar and extraordinary advantages of the Canadian Pacific which are not enjoyed by American roads, he said: "I understand the Dominion government has granted the Canadian Pacific railway a subsidy or bonus of \$25,000,000; has donated to it 25,000,000 acres of land, embracing only such as are suitable for settlement; has also given right of way, station

grounds, dock privileges, and water frontage, in so far as within the control of the government ; and, further, has constructed and transferred to the Canadian Pacific railway company, free of cost, 714 miles of railway, the estimated value of which, according to that railway company's report for the year 1887 is \$35,000,000. The Canadian Pacific was permitted to import steel rails free of duty, also other material used in the construction of its road and telegraph line. Under its charter, the Canadian Pacific is freed for all time from taxation by the Dominion government, or by any provincial government established after date of its charter. Its land grant in the northwest territory is free from taxation for twenty years unless sold in the meantime. In addition to all this the Canadian government has bound itself not to permit, during the term of twenty years, the building of any line or lines that would parallel the Canadian Pacific railway. It is a privileged competitor against the carriers of the United States; and the reasons for this are many and exceptional. Among these, it has lower fixed charges than any other system of roads on the American continent. It also has cheap labor and material for its construction, repairs, and maintenance expenses. It has, accessible to a large portion of its lines, extensive fields of coal of the finest quality, and in exhaustless quantity. Being practically exempt from our laws, it can dictate the rates and most successfully compete for the transcontinental traffic, taking the same at less rates than the United States roads can afford to accept; taking it, too, without depleting the revenue natural to and necessary for its local traffic. The United States roads, on the other hand, are tied up under restrictive provisions, and are compelled to make large sacrifices of their local earnings if they would compete with the foreign lines for the through traffic. The damage already done to American transportation interests by Canadian carriers is sufficiently serious in itself, but it is trifling in comparison with

the damage likely to be inflicted by our Canadian competitor in the future, because of the peculiar position they occupy as against American carriers. It would not be unnatural if, emboldened by their past success in procuring that which the American lines have built up and heretofore held, they should become more aggresssive, seeing that they command the valuable local traffic of a vast domain, the earnings from which are absolutely unaffected by any rates, however low they choose to make them, to secure American tonnage. The most subtile instance of England's movements for the maintenance of commercial supremacy, the invasion of American commerce, and the absorption of the benefits of American prosperity, is found in the Canadian Pacific railway and its steamship lines. This is a curious feature of protection which has not yet attracted the attention it merits. That is to say, the American roads need protection against foreign aggression. While all our other domestic industries that require it are protected, the wage-earner in our railroad service, the shareholders and purchasers of railroad securities, are not only not protected, but deprived by restrictive legislation of the ability to protect themselves.

"The magnitude of the railroad interest, ordinarily so imperfectly understood, is admirably brought out by Poor, the highest authority in such matters, who made the following calculations for 1888: "In point of importance the railroad interest now takes precedence of all other industries or enterprises. Its magnitude is greater than any other interest in the world, and it has become so thoroughly a part of the economic system of the republic as to be second only to the government itself.

"In order to show how closely interwoven are the interests of railroad stockholders and the working classes of the country, a few calculations are herewith submitted: If we estimate that in the operation of our railways there are employed in prosperous times

an average of six persons per mile of road, it would show a total, on the basis of our present mileage, of more than 936,000 persons regularly employed in connection with that single interest; and if to this number we add 780,000—a number representing an average of five to the mile—as the number of persons employed in connection with all those industries which are directly affiliated with and dependent on our railway system, such as locomotive and car-building establishments, rail mills, etc., we have a total of nearly 1,716,000 persons, or an average of eleven to the mile of railroad. Assuming that each of these would represent a family averaging five persons, we have an aggregate population of 8,580,000—nearly one-seventh of the total for the country at large—of which 90 per cent are actually dependent on the railway system for the sustenance of life. If we allow, as the average rate of wages of those employed in operating, say \$450 per annum, and for those employed in locomotive building, etc., say \$500 per annum, we have a total pay roll of \$911,200,000 per annum, of which at least \$500,000,000 is directly chargeable to operating account, while the remainder is for account of betterments, improvements, and new construction. Add to this the amount paid to laborers engaged in construction in such a year as 1887. In that year there were built new roads whose aggregate length was 12,984 miles. If we take, as the average cost of labor in grading, track-laying, etc., for each mile of this total, say \$10,000, and allow the average daily wages of laborers to be \$1.50, with, say 100 laborers of all classes to each mile, this would show the average time for the completion of a mile of railroad to be sixty-seven days. On this basis the construction of 12,984 miles of railroad would give steady employment for 300 days in the year to an army of 289,976 laborers, whose total earnings would be \$129,840,000.

“This gives a total of 2,006,000 persons, to which we will add 44,000 as the number whose labors are

stimulated by the employment of the 289,976 last mentioned, making a total of 2,050,000, representing families numbering in the aggregate 12,250,000 persons. To maintain this number there would be expended by railroad and others under the above calculations at least \$1,040,000,000 per annum, or very nearly \$3,000,000 for each day in the year. The regular expenditure of more than 90 per cent of this vast sum stimulates other industries, and in this manner the volume of general business is increased in progressive ratio.

“In these calculations no account has been taken of the large number of people forming the proprietary interest of this vast aggregation of capital, which comprises people in all classes and in all occupations, and scattered throughout all parts of the country.

“The New York Central railroad company has 10,000 stockholders, whose average holding is about \$9,000. If we take that sum as representing the average holding of all stock and bondholders in the country, the total number of such would be over 1,000,000, representing more than 5,000,000 persons with important interests in the success of the railroad system.

“From these deductions a general idea can be gathered of the magnitude of the railroad interest, and how vast and widespread is the interest of our people in that system.”

“According to the accepted method employed by the authority quoted above, with regard to railroad-ing in the United States at large, if only a few leading facts concerning the property of the Southern Pacific railroad be taken as a basis from which to generalize, we may form an approximate estimate of its magnitude and importance. In August 1891 there were on this company's pay rolls 26,886 persons actually employed in conducting its operations, or, say, four per mile, whose wages footed up \$1,440,000 a month, or more than \$17,000,000 a year. Following the line of

argument adopted by Poor, but making every allowance or deduction possible on account of the difference of conditions of railroading as a national question and as locally affecting the Southern Pacific system, which, at present, is doing but little construction work, it can be safely said that there are 10,000 additional persons engaged in labor affiliated with or dependent upon this company, to whom are paid, in round numbers, annually, upwards of \$6,500,000. The total number of persons thus considered approximates, 37,000, whose yearly wages amount to upwards of \$23,000,000. If each of these employés represents five persons, these figures show an aggregate of 185,000 men, women, and children or, at least, one-ninth as many souls as make up the entire population of California, whose maintenance is more or less involved in the operations of the Southern Pacific railroad company."

From the foregoing the reader will readily comprehend how large is the army of men employed directly and indirectly in the railroad service. Standing for years at the head of the largest corporation on the Pacific coast, and having to employ hundreds of thousands of laborers, Mr Towne has naturally and necessarily taken a great interest in the question of labor. His views on the subject, which are bold and sharp, are entitled to consideration. Touching his opinion of Chinese emigration, and the reason of his sympathy with the Chinese, he said: "The Chinaman is a man among men, a man from a great nation, a man coming from a class of people who have nearly solved the problem of life based upon the most frugal and economical habits. The Chinaman has thoroughly learned the lesson of labor, and no other people in the world can surpass him in this. My experience in the handling of men has taught me to be observant of the disposition to work manifested by the different nationalities, and as I have seen the steady application of this silent and patient toiler, never

losing a moment, and ready and willing at all times, he has seemed to me inspired with the love of work ; and, as we all know, labor, whether physical or mental, brings out all there is in man. He who labors simply because he must, will surely fall short of his fellow workman who is actuated by that spirit of honest and economical labor which is so closely interwoven with the principles of our government. The great mental force and intellectual exertion evinced in framing our constitution was the effort of zealous workers, stimulated and encouraged by their constituents, who, in those early days, toiled for what their toil would produce. The Chinaman is persecuted solely because he loves work, and is too faithful and too frugal for our European element. True Christians are now and have always been ready to welcome him to this country. It is the disgruntled, corner-grocery politician who opposes him, because the man from the flowery kingdom will not demand ten hours' pay for eight hours' service ; because he will not unite with the labor agitator, join the labor leagues, and spend the greater portion of his earnings at the groggeries. Had the Chinaman manifested a disposition to combine with this disturbing element, the right hand of fellowship would have been extended to him with a neatly folded ballot. Bad whiskey generates in the labor agitator his communistic inspirations, and his followers are made to believe that there is no end to what may be obtained through organized effort, absolutely regardless of the value of the service they may be able to render ; regardless of the value of money ; regardless of circumstances and conditions which govern and control their employer ; in fact, seemingly regardless of the value of any factor entering into the calculation of supply and demand."

He does not regard immigration from Europe or any other country as injurious, inasmuch as we have millions of acres of unoccupied soil for them to till. We should, he thinks, welcome all comers from all

nations, so long as they will work and refrain from agitation.

As to our naturalization laws, it seems to him that they are all wrong, and should be so amended as to place the foreigner under the same restrictions as those of our own children; that there is no good reason or justice in admitting a foreigner to the ballot box until he has lived among us at least long enough to become familiar with our laws, methods, and our state and social relations. "As a rule," he says, "the boy eight years old understands more of our government and its advantages than the average foreigner who lands upon our shores and soon after is given the ballot; while this boy, bright and intellectual, with all his knowledge of our affairs, must wait thirteen years more before he is admitted to citizenship; yet these naturalization laws, I apprehend, will not be amended until our national legislature shall have the moral courage to stand up for the right."

Mr Towne has taken but little part in politics, though by virtue of his employment he has been engrossed at all times in political economy. He has never held nor desired to hold public office. Such a thing would be irreconcilable with his work and his inclination. Yet he feels that he is a servant of the people, for in what capacity is one more in actual public service than in railroad life? In touch with the community at every vital point, questions of general concern form a necessary part of his reflections. His observations have been largely practical, because the outgrowth of his own experience of cause and effect in our political, governmental, and social systems. He judges by what he knows, and is not given to abstract theory; hence, if he has original views and entertains radical ideas on certain subjects, it is at least not because he jumps at conclusions. Proud of his country, he is not blind to the weaknesses of Americanism. "The American, from my observation," he is wont to say, "is not so much of a politi-

cian by nature as the foreigner, who comes among us from the despotic forms of government on the European shores, where he has been held in restraint. On reaching America his inherent ambition, with its communistic tendencies, seems to assert itself, and is aided by the lax nature of our naturalization laws. The result is we have a ward politician, either as a follower or leader, in accordance with the force of his character, and his natural confederates are laborers from abroad. It is largely this laboring element, led by irresponsible agitators, who have an inborn hostility to those who have acquired property ; and herein lies the danger to our government, which, though it would be one of the best with a qualification or property vote, yet is one of the weakest—weak because so large a percentage of votes are in the hands of irresponsible men, who permit themselves to be led by agitators. As these votes make the laws, this irrational element is constantly encroaching upon capital, directly through our legislatures and national councils, which, owing to their dependence upon the influence of public opinion, are likely to favor laws that may be tainted with hurtful regulation ; and this public opinion is largely created and stimulated by the press, eager to fill its columns with sensational matter. This leaves us, as a last resort, to fall back upon the only safe-guard left, the supreme court of the United States. We should exalt this tribunal above all susceptibility to public influence by making the justices ineligible to the presidency, and, in every other way possible, independent of and indifferent to the popular sentiment. The chief justice and the associate justices should be appointed for life, with the most ample and generous salary commensurate with their ability, their learning, and the high position of honor and trust which they hold.

“So far as I can perceive,” he says, “there is no danger to be apprehended from combinations of wealth to control legislation. The influence of design-

ing and unprincipled leaders, professing to represent the people, seems to be stronger than the influence of corporate wealth. Among the greatest public dangers is the character of the many men who ride into office upon votes of the people whom they wheedle into the belief that they have the general welfare at heart! There is a constant tendency of officeholders to pander to popular prejudice, seemingly with the view of personal gain, or of creating a sentiment that will insure their reelection. There is no object-lesson by which I can better illustrate what I mean than the many scandals which are continuously coming to light in the legislatures of the various states of the union.

“Sumptuary laws or regulations are becoming dangerous to our form of government. There are too many attempts on the part of the few to regulate the affairs of the many; there should be little or no governmental restraint placed upon the people. The nation is governed best when governed least.

“Respecting prohibition, its consideration involves many things of moment. The manufacture of malt and spirituous liquors has become one of the most important industries in the United States. The farmers find employment in raising grain for its consumption; great industries are started here, there, and everywhere, employing thousands of men, who have families dependent upon them, in this vast field of labor; casks, bottles, boxes, and packages of all kinds are required for distribution, creating another demand for labor, and thereby giving profitable employment to many people whose happy homes would be disturbed by the abolition of this industry. Its output per annum in dollars and cents is equivalent to the entire gross earnings of all the railroads of the United States, more than \$1,000,000,000. Inasmuch as prohibition would be very likely to entail hardship upon thousands of our people, why attempt to regulate this great industry, merely for the sake of endeavoring to correct evils which have grown out of it, in the face of the

fact that the good resulting from it many times overbalances its evil effects? I would not prohibit the manufacture or sale of intoxicants, but I would anticipate intemperance by punishing the miscreant who uses them to excess.

“In regard to female suffrage, I do not believe that woman should be taken out of the domestic sphere which is made sacred to her by nature, and be thrown among men into the pollution of politics.

“As to the policy of protection or free trade, the question is more national than local. The policy of protection is republican; it is the true system for this government as a nation, under which, however, there are no doubt some localities not so favorably affected as others; yet on the whole, protection is the policy that will make our country rich and prosperous. My experience in matters of transportation teaches me that a nation like our own should supply its vital wants chiefly through its own labor, and it must prosecute the various branches of manufacture and other industry in order to promote prosperity. It is confirmed by universal experience that new countries having abundant and fertile soil, producing grain with facility, naturally tend to become and continue to be exporters of crude products and importers of manufactures, and that they are likely to continue this policy long after they may have attained a condition to manufacture as cheaply for themselves. It certainly seems to me to be injurious to a new country to be dependent for its manufactured articles on an old one. What we need first, and which can only be attained by means of protective duties, is an equilibrium between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; second, to supply our own wants and export the surplus of goods manufactured in exchange by way of reciprocity with other nations, or in other words not to make of our country so much a manufacturer for other nations as for herself; as I believe it is safe to affirm that articles of consumption which can just as well

and with as little labor be made at home, should manifestly be made by our own people."

I adduce these specimens of Mr Towne's thinking, not that they are mine, or perhaps anyone else's but his own, but because they are his, because they are an expression of his intellectuality and individuality. A man's life is in his thoughts; they are the index to his character. If, as in this instance, action follows thought as sound follows blow, individuality is developed. This is education in its best sense. How the development occurs is less important than the fact that it does occur. Mr Towne is educated; the force that was in him is evolved according to his nature. He assimilated for his development whatever he required from observation or books, but above all grew by experience and practice. A close and constant observer, he could not remember a day in which he had not learned something worth remembering. Never indulging himself in the conceit that he knew enough, he has ever been on the alert to acquire information from whatever source. Thus his store of knowledge has been continuously enlarged. "It is character which builds an existence out of circumstances. From the same material one man builds palaces, another hovels: the one rears a stately edifice, the other lives forever amid ruins. The block of granite that was an obstacle in the pathway of the weak becomes a stepping stone for the strong." The power that there is in education is derived from faithful application to whatever one is engaged upon, and his progress, which may be of the highest usefulness, in any sphere, is limited only by his own labor and spirit. It is in this fact that I find Mr Towne admirable, and, what is very much better, useful, because, as he helped himself, so may others help themselves, and succeed according to their capabilities. "I felt satisfied," Mr Towne has been often heard to say, "that there was very much to learn, and that integrity, perseverance, and good

temper, were elements I should possess if I would succeed." He was endowed with talents which, if improved, enable men to dominate in those things in which the world is ambitious to control, wealth, position, influence. Others starting out as fairly equipped as he, lag or drop out of the race, because they neglect to cultivate by exercise the virtues which lie at the root of personal superiority, the first of which is self-control, out of which grows self-knowledge, and by reflection a knowledge of those about us, who enter into our living. The wisdom of common sense follows, then labor, coupled with will to make it invincible and industry to render it triumphant.

In the maturity of his self-culture, Mr Towne's memory is unusually good, very susceptible and retentive, especially as regards events, dates, and faces. His powers of analysis and generalization are such that certain friends, who held that there are greater demands upon the reasoning faculty in the profession of the lawyer than in that of transportation, which I do not believe, used to say he ought to have been bred to the law. Blending originality and independence with adaptability and caution, he is at once radical and conservative. Thoroughly self-reliant, though ever ready to learn, he relishes responsibility, and his disposition is to lead rather than to follow. Self-contained and ever ready for mental effort, he is capable of a high degree of concentration; and his faculties are under such control that he can turn instantly and altogether away with all his energy from one engrossing topic to another, without apparent disturbance. He has, in masterful development, the faculty of brushing away or piercing through the non-essentials that befog the ordinary brain, and is thus enabled to get directly at the kernel of a business proposition, often before it is stated in detail. His assistants not infrequently receive his decision before the subject they come to present seems fully laid before him, or while, perhaps,

they have much that they would add in elaboration. Sometimes a half-finished sentence gives him a clue to the whole story. Thus endowed with insight and discrimination, it is not surprising that he condenses and dispatches with rapidity a mass of business which would otherwise overwhelm him.

In the discharge of his official duties he is a disciplinarian who cannot brook inefficiency or neglect, and he exacts the most strict compliance with his instructions; but he exacts more from himself, perhaps, than from his subordinates. Yet the courtesy with which he ordinarily softens command causes his orders to be obeyed with alacrity. Full of personal magnetism and winning in his address, he can control by sympathy; but if this fails, he can crush by the sheer power of will. His experience has been one of tremendous labor, with more or less conflict at every turn; but having first fairly secured the mastery of himself, he was strengthened to cope with others. Plain in every respect, unpretentious and business like, he requires expedition in speech and work; but with whomever he comes in contact he seeks to be patient and agreeable, and he meets all persons, above or below him, with due consideration and politeness. If ever stern or severe when at work, the pressure under which he lives can fairly be pleaded in extenuation. At certain points his self-discipline is admirable; he does not allow himself to give way to passion, the nervous reaction from which is hurtful, but he yields to his impulse to be a little sarcastic at times at the expense of others. The fruits of his life's labors, the whole sum of his energies, are a contribution to general charity in the form of industrial development; nor does the direct appeal for help ever find him unresponsive. Having a man's courage and generosity, a woman's or a child's distress commands his sympathies.

The strain that he has been under for years, consequent upon the great labor, responsibilities, and

cares of his office, has taxed his nervous organization : on more than one occasion he would have succumbed to the pressure but for his extraordinary grit. Kept up to the highest tension, he has scarcely ever allowed himself relaxation. To those who hold his health and welfare near at heart, and tell him he must rest : " Not now ; " he answers : " we will have by-and-by, after physical existence, all eternity for rest." There is room for philosophizing here ; but let each mortal so organized work out his destiny, for he will whether we will or not. Mr Towne has but slight inclination or time for social diversions, and has taken only such part in society as his eminent position in the community has made it almost impracticable for him to avoid. His home is his place of rest and recuperation ; he finds there, among his family and loyal friends, all the pleasures that he craves outside of business. A patron of the clubs, he is not a club man. Mrs Towne has passed with him through all his vicissitudes, and borne in her sphere the woman's full share of her husband's trials ; and, as in the case of pure metal the severer the test the brighter it shines, so has her character been demonstrated. Their only child, Evelyn Amelia, born in Chicago September 2, 1862, married Charles N. Shaw, whose decease occurred in January 1891. The issue of this marriage is a son, Nelson Towne Shaw, born May 16, 1883, who bears a most striking resemblance to his grandfather. A promising representative of the tenth generation of the family, he gives evidence, at a very early age, of the strong features of character which individualize and distinguish his ancestor of the eighth generation. Of Mr Towne's brothers, all have been prominently connected with transportation on the great roads of the country, on which, by their own efforts, they rose to honorable and responsible positions. Three of them, H. A., formerly general superintendent of the Northern Pacific railroad ; M. M., assistant superintendent of the Atchison and

Nebraska; and M. D., many years identified with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy, have all retired, and became engaged in other business; L. W., for many years general superintendent of the Kansas City Fort Scott and Gulf railroad, retired from that position on account of declining health, but remained identified with the interest he so long represented. His only sister now living, Semantha, is Mrs George Marsh, a resident of Providence, Rhode Island.











